

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND GOALS

BACKGROUND

The Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority (Flood Authority) has prepared this Draft Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan for the Chehalis River basin to define flood problems in the Chehalis basin and to propose solutions for those problems. The Flood Authority intends to finalize this Draft Plan in the next year. However, the Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan will remain a work in progress and will be revised as the Flood Authority continues its efforts to develop solutions to flooding problems.

Major Flooding Issues in the Basin

Flooding is a common, historical occurrence in the Chehalis River basin. Major flood events on the Chehalis River have affected Lewis, Thurston, and Grays Harbor Counties in the years 1972, 1975, 1986, 1990, 1996, 2007, and 2009. In the past 30 years Lewis County has experienced 16 federally declared disasters. Of these, 13 were either caused or exacerbated by flooding. These floods have caused millions of dollars of flood damage and the disruption of lives and commerce. The flooding closed Interstate 5 through Chehalis and Centralia for multiple days during the 1996, 2007, and 2009 floods.

Authority and scope for the Chehalis River Basin CFHMP

The Flood Authority was formed in response to the 2007 flooding event throughout Lewis, Grays Harbor, and Thurston Counties and on the Chehalis Reservation. The Authority was formed by an Interlocal Agreement between eleven jurisdictions in the river basin in April 2008, to evaluate flooding issues throughout the Basin. House Bills 3374 and 3375 appropriated \$2.5 million by the legislature for the Flood Authority to develop or participate in the development of flood hazard mitigation measures throughout the basin. The House Bills appropriated an additional \$47.5 million in state general obligation bonds to the Office of Financial Management, working with and through other state agencies, the Flood Authority, and other local governments, to participate in flood hazard mitigation projects for the Chehalis River basin.

The Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority consists of eleven jurisdictions: Grays Harbor, Lewis, and Thurston Counties; the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis; the cities of Aberdeen, Centralia, Chehalis, Montesano, and Oakville; and the towns of Bucoda and Pe Ell.

The purpose of the Flood Authority, according to the Interlocal Agreement, is to develop and participate in the development of flood hazard mitigation measures throughout the basin, and provide a formal and organized process to ensure:

- That flood control projects are identified and implemented that address the flood problems in the basin.
- That good public policy supports environmentally sensitive responses to protect communities and their residents from flooding, if the responses provide benefits which exceed costs, including costs associated with a no action response.
- That state and federal funding sources are well-informed of Basin Government options and needs.
- That the design for basin flood control projects incorporate options, features and betterments that may benefit the basin communities and the Basin Governments.
- That the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority will oversee moving current and future Chehalis River Basin Flood reduction projects forward until such time as a Flood Control District is formed and adopted by the stakeholders' legislative authorities.

The Flood Authority also agreed to the following goals in the Interlocal Agreement:

- To create a Basin Flood Control District as soon as is practicable.
- To inform state and federal funding sources of project options and the needs of the basin communities.
- To work with the State of Washington to develop appropriate policy for a basin-wide flood control project.
- To seek adequate funding for the Basin Governments to identify, study and permit projects for localized problems.
- To disseminate information to residents about options and alternatives.
- To coordinate flood control activities, actions and responses.

The Flood Authority decided in November 2008 to develop a basin-wide Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan as a means to identify and prioritize projects for Flood Authority funding under its state authorization.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Flood Authority began preparing the Draft Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan. Existing CFHMPs for basin jurisdictions formed the basis for the Draft Plan. The Flood Authority also conducted a monthly series of work sessions to develop the plan from January through June 2009.

This Draft CFHMP generally meets the guidelines of the State of Washington Flood Control Assistance Account Program (FCAAP) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System (CRS).

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

The Flood Authority held two public workshops in February 2009, one in Chehalis on February 11 and one in Montesano on February 12. Approximately 200 people attended the workshop in Chehalis and approximately 40 people attended in Montesano. At the workshops, the Flood Authority introduced the planning process to members of the public then asked for feedback specifically on goals, flood problem areas, and recommended actions.

In March 2009, the Flood Authority commissioned Stuart Elway of Elway Research to perform a public values telephone survey of basin residents. The Flood Authority used the results of the survey to revise its goals at its work session on April 2, 2009.

DEFINING GOALS

The Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority has adopted a set of nine goals to provide a framework for the development of the CFHMP as well as guidance for flood hazard mitigation.

Process

The Flood Authority began its CFHMP process with a workshop on goals held on January 15, 2009. For the purpose of the workshop, the Authority agreed to the following definitions of "goal," "objective," and "task" (originally developed by David Drucker):

Goal – A statement that provides clear direction and purpose but may not be fully attainable

Objective – A product or effort that moves toward the Goal, is attainable and is measurable, and has various discrete products

Task – A discrete product or effort that is possible, measurable, and contributes to the Objective

At the January 15 workshop, the Flood Authority agreed upon eight initial goals. After the workshop, the Board Advisory Committee further developed the language of the goals. In February 2009 the Authority conducted public workshops to gather citizen feedback on goals. In March 2009 the Authority conducted a public values telephone survey. The Authority held a goal revision workshop on April 2, 2009 to reconsider their

goals in light of public feedback from the public workshops and the survey. The Authority agreed to revise one existing goal and add a new goal.

Goals

The nine goals adopted by the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority are:

- Protect life and property basin-wide, including tributaries, by developing a mix of strategies that reduce flood damage
- Promote the wise use of public and private resources
- Enhance understanding of the hydrologic processes in the Chehalis River system
- Ensure that land use plans and regulations protect floodplain functions
- Ensure that flood reduction strategies protect, or enhance, the basin's natural resources
- Increase public awareness and understanding of flooding
- Assure that there are mechanisms in place to implement the recommendations in this plan
- Protect the communities' interest in growth and economic sustainability
- Protect property rights

RELATED PLANS

This Draft CFHMP is based on existing CFHMPs developed by jurisdictions within the Chehalis basin. Table 1-1 lists the existing CFHMPs that were used.

Table 1-1. Existing Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plans

Jurisdiction	Title	Year	Notes
Bucoda	Town of Bucoda Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan	1999	The town is proposing to update the plan.
Centralia	City of Centralia Comprehensive Flood Management and Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan	2008	Flooding issues are the same as presented in the Lewis County CFHMP.

Jurisdiction	Title	Year	Notes
Chehalis Tribe	DRAFT Comprehensive Flood hazard Management Plan for Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation	2009	
Montesano	All Hazard Mitigation Plan Addendum 2	2007	Addendum to Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Grays Harbor Region
Lewis County	Lewis County Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan	2008	
Grays Harbor County	Grays Harbor County Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan	2001	Adopted Resolution 01-161
Thurston County	Thurston County Flood Hazard Management Plan	1999	The County is proposing to update the plan.